

February 27, 2020

Dear students and faculty/staff colleagues –

We want you to be assured that we are paying attention to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, and Grand View's Emergency Response Planning Committee discussed it during our regular meeting this morning.

We are confident that the current risk to our campus community is very low, but in view of expert warnings that spread of the virus in the US is essentially inevitable, we are monitoring the situation and reviewing our options in case the situation changes for the worse. We do have plans that were developed during the H1N1 virus outbreak in 2009-10, and we are reviewing them as a first step in preparing to address local or regional impacts of COVID-19. We will provide updates as circumstances warrant.

The Polk County Health Department (www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health) is not currently providing localized information, which reflects our community's current low-risk status, but is providing general information sourced from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control). You received a message earlier this afternoon from the Grand View Student Health Center that included some information from the Iowa Department of Public Health.

Regards,

Carl Moses, Provost and VP for Academic Affairs, on behalf of the Emergency Response Planning Committee

More information:

Summary (see www.cdc.gov)

The virus causing illnesses, first in China but now in several other countries, has been designated SARS-CoV-2. This virus has not been previously detected in humans, but it is related to some other human coronavirus strains, including SARS-CoV (responsible for SARS, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, first reported in 2003) and MERS-CoV (responsible for MERS, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, first reported in 2012). The disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 has been designated COVID-19 (COVID = coronavirus disease). As of today, the CDC reports 14 confirmed cases in the US in addition to the 45 cases among US citizens repatriated from Wuhan, China, or the *Diamond Princess* cruise ship. So far, nobody in Iowa has tested positive for the virus, but 12 individuals are being monitored by the Iowa Department of Public Health.

Symptoms and severity

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to those of other virus-caused respiratory illnesses: fever, cough, and shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. Some individuals have apparently been infected without experiencing symptoms. Others have experienced mild to severe symptoms, and as reported by news media, deaths have resulted in some of the most severe cases. The incubation period (the time between exposure and occurrence of symptoms) has ranged from 2 to 14 days.

The mortality rate is difficult to assess because of the unknown number of unreported cases, but it is estimated to be about 2%. The risk depends on age (risk is much lower for those under 50) and pre-existing conditions that weaken the body's ability to recover.

Prevention and treatment

There is no vaccine to prevent or antiviral medication to treat COVID-19. Depending on the severity of symptoms, treatment ranges from relieving symptoms to supporting vital organ functions. Prevention relies on good hygiene like frequent handwashing or use of hand sanitizer, cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces (e.g., computer keyboards, table tops, door knobs), avoiding people with flu-like symptoms, keeping fingers away from your eyes, nose, or mouth, and coughing or sneezing into a tissue that you immediately throw in the trash. Facemasks are not recommended for healthy individuals, but individuals with symptoms can wear a mask to reduce the spread of the virus. People who experience flu-like symptoms should isolate themselves, call a health care provider, and travel in public only as necessary to obtain medical care.